

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

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FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6267

INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL LUANDA

UNCLAS YAOUNDE 2382

FROM AMB C. ROBERT MOORE AS HEAD OF USDEL

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR TP

SUBJ: INDEPENDENCE DAY CEREMONIES SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

REF: YAOUNDE 2377

1. DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE CAME INTO BEING JULY 12 IN IMPRESSIVE CEREMONY WHICH TOOK PLACE IN DULY NAMED INDEPENDENCE PLACE ON WATERFRONT IN TROPICAL AND PARADISAL SETTING OF COUNTRYS MAIN CITY, SAO TOME.

2. KEY EVENTS IN MOVING CEREMONY WERE THE SIGNING OF THE OFFICIAL DOCUMENT BY WHICH PORTUGAL RELINQUISHED ITS RULE AND THE HANDLING OF THE DOCUMENT TO THE NEW PRESIDENT, MANUEL DA COSTA, FOLLOWED BY THE LOWERING OF THE PORTUGUESE FLAG AND RAISING OF FLAG OF THE NEW REPUBLIC. NEW PRESIDENT THEN MADE FORTY-MINUTE SPEECH (IN PORTUGUESE). CROWD WAS RESPONSIVE, AND ATMOSPHERE WAS FESTIVE, BUT ACCORDING TO DELEGATES DIGGS AND COLLINS, LACKED THE EMOTIONAL INTENSITY

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SO EVIDENT AT MOZAMBIQUE CEREMONY. PORTUGAL WAS REPRESENTED

BY ADMIRAL R. COUTINHO, FORMER HIGH COMMISSIONER IN ANGOLA WHO ARRIVED FROM LISBON AT DAYBREAK JULY 12. PRIMIN GENERAL VASCO DOS SANTOS GONCALVES HAD BEEN SCHEDULED TO COME, BUT DUE TO GOVT CRISIS, HAD TO GIVE UP TRIP. ADMIRAL SIGNED OFFICIAL DOCUMENT AND WIDELY EXCHANGED CHEERFUL EMBRACO WITH NEW PRESIDENT AND OTHER MLFTP LEADERS. SHOUTS FROM CROWD OF "LONG LIVE PORTUGAL" MUSTHAVE BEEN WELCOME.

3. NUMBER OF COUNTRIES SENT OFFICIAL DELEGATIONS, IN MANY CASES HEADED BY OR COMPRISING AMBASSADORS RESIDENT IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, E.G. THE US , USSR, CHINA, FRANCE, ITALY, EGERMANY, WGERMANY, GHANA, CAMEROON, NIGERIA, ALGERIA AND SOMALIA. HIGHEST RANKING VISITOR WAS PRESIDENT BONGO OF GABON, WHO WAS ACCOMPANIED BY MME. BONGO AND ENTOURAGE. HIS EARLIER IDENTIFICATION AND SUPPORT OF MLFTP LEADERS EARNED HIM SPECIAL RECOGNITION AT CEREMONIES. LIBERATION MOVEMENT REPS IN EVIDENCE WERE ANC, MPLA AND DOUBTLESS OTHERS. UN REPRESENTED BY ASST SECGEN FARAH AND UNDP REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR AFRICA DOO KINGUE. LARGEST DELEGATION WAS THAT OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA, NUMBERING TWELVE, AS CONTRASTED TO GENERAL LIMIT OF TWO. EQUATORIAL GUINEAN DELEGATION WAS HEADED BY DON BONIFACIO, VICE FONMIN, AND INCLUDED TEN MEMBERS OF WOMENS SECTION OF PUNT. DESPITE DELAYS AND CONFUSION IN FINDING ACCOMMODATIONS, CAUSED LARGELY BY LARGER INFLUX OF DELEGATES THAN EXPECTED -- AND GENERAL INEXPERIENCE, THIS MAJOR EVENT WENT ON WELL.

4. USDEL, WHICH ARRIVED SAO TOME EVENING JLULY 11, AND DEPARTED LATE AFTERNOON JULY 1: WAS WELL RECEIVED, ALONG WITH OTHER DELEGATIONS, HAD SHORT MTG WITH NEW PRESIDENT, MANUEL DA COSTA ON JULY 12 WHICH REPORTED SEPARATELY (REFTEL). PRESENCE ON DELEGATION OF REPS DIGGS AND COLLINS PROVIDED WELCOME OPPORTUNITY TO RENEW CONTACT WITH AFRICANS IN OTHER DELEGATIONS WITH SPECIAL INTEREST AND FAST MOVING DECOLONIZATION DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA. WE ALL APPRECIATED OPPORTUNITY TO REPRESENT PRESIDENT FORD AND AMERICAN GOVT ON THIS HISTORIC OCCASION.
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